

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections to the claims set forth in the Advisory Action of December 19, 2003 are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 13 in line with the Examiner's suggestions in the Advisory Action. If the above amendment does not place the application in condition for allowance, Applicant requests a telephonic interview to solicit an Examiner's amendment in order to place the application in condition for allowance.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-17 are currently pending.

Claims 1-17 stand rejected.

Claims 1 and 13 have been amended.

None of the amendments to the claims constitutes new matter.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of U.S. Patent No. 5,953,467 to Madsen and U.S. Patent No. 5,689,597 to Besse. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested based on the following remarks.

Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 13 in line with the Examiner's suggestions in the Advisory Action. As such, claims 1 and 13 are patentable over the combination of the Madsen and the Besse references

Claims 2-12 which are dependent on claim 1 are thus also patentable over the combination of the Madsen and the Besse references.

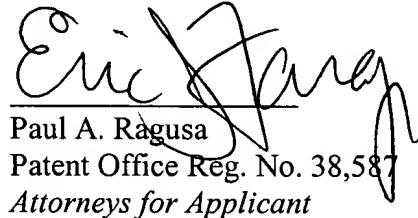
Claims 14-17 which are dependent on claim 13 are thus also patentable over the combination of the Madsen and the Besse references.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, the application is now believed to be in condition for formal allowance. Prompt and favorable action is respectfully requested. Applicant does not believe that any additional fee is required in connection with the submission of this document. However, should any additional fee be required, or if any overpayment has been made, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees, or credit or any overpayments made, to Deposit Account 02-4377.

Respectfully submitted,

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